

Virginia Comprehensive Assistance Network [VA CAN] Meeting
April 26, 2006
Meeting Notes

Attendance:

Richard Rasmussen and Rodney Sobin--Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP)
Keith Boisvert--DEQ Office of Pollution Prevention (OPP)
Eric Olson— Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR)
Jim McKean—Department of Business Assistance (DBA)
Stu Neal—Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA)

Roundtable

Stu Neal spoke about the Central Virginia Small Business Resource Day event that will take place on May 19, 2006 from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm at the Greater Richmond Convention Center. The event will focus on federal, state, and local government procurement opportunities. There will be 36 seminars (some in Spanish), 52 display booths, and 240 networking tables. The Small Business Administration (SBA) will provide technical assistance and same day approval of applications under the SBA Community Express Loan Program. Eleven public agencies have partnered for this event, which is expected to draw 2,000 to 4,000 participants. See <http://www.ccwasmallbusiness.com> for more information. The 2007 event is already being planned to be a 4-day event with a focus on international trade. With SBA collaboration, it will target participation from across the East Coast.

Eric Olson provided an update on DPOR activities, including pending regulations mandated by the General Assembly to require eight hours' pre-licensure contractor education covering business practices. With over 67,000 contractors in Virginia, DPOR expects 1,000 applications per month for contractor licenses. Also the Contractors Board adopted regulations requiring biannual training on applicable building codes for tradesmen (e.g., plumbers, electricians). There are about 34,000 tradesmen in Virginia. The Cosmetology Board has added aestheticians (people who use chemical peels and mechanical dermal abrasion methods) and nail technicians to the list of regulated professions.

There was discussion on modes for DPOR-required training and education, including roles for community colleges and private training firms. This included discussion of some limitations of the software used by Virginia community colleges to enroll students and the distinction between community college registrar office student registrations and registration of students for short courses and seminars such as those required by DPOR. Stu Neal indicated that CCWA does have means to surmount such limitations.

Keith Boisvert noted Office of Pollution Prevention (OPP) planned participation in a Department of Labor and Industry occupational safety and health conference to occur May 31 through June 1 in Arlington. OPP will represent the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP). Also there is a VEEP Users Group of VEEP participating and interested companies and organizations that will have a conference at the Hotel Roanoke during October 11 through 13.

Richard Rasmussen reported on the DEQ Northern Virginia Auto Body Self-Certification Program. Of approximately 230 shops for whom the program and its mandatory regulatory portions are pertinent, about 180 have registered with DEQ. Also, 40 to 50 shops have submitted or plan to submit their self-certification packages. DEQ is assessing these submissions. Part of the program includes incentives such as training on the laser aiming device for auto painting. About 35 Northern Virginia shops indicated interest in such training and DEQ is discussing with the Iowa Waste Reduction Center plans for providing such training, likely this coming fall. There was also discussion of how some parts of the auto body and broader auto service industry would like the state to require licensure of practitioners. Further, SBAP participation in business events, planned efforts to provide technical assistance regarding small boilers, and regional (EPA Region III) interest (piloted by PA and DE) in promoting auxiliary power units for heavy diesel trucks were discussed.

Jim McKean noted that Business Appreciation Week will occur May 13-20, with 40 to 50 regional and local events scheduled, some starting the first week of May. DBA will participate in as many of these events as it can.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 20, 2006 at DEQ's Piedmont Regional Office at 10:00 AM. Linda Hawkins of the Internal Revenue Service is the scheduled speaker.